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ABSTRACT

Highlighted in this paper are several hidden costs entailed by mandating that all teachers be prepared through 5 or 6 years of teacher education, with the professional part of that preparation occurring at the graduate level. Four areas where mandating extended preparation may lead to hidden costs are identified: (1) encouraging a focus on procedural issues; (2) narrowing the talent pool of prospective teachers; (3) reducing the diversity of colleges/universities offering teacher education; and (4) neglecting the financial implications of extended teacher preparation. While these topics are at times overlapping, they have been separated in this paper in order to facilitate discussion and analysis. (JD)

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THE HIDDEN COSTS OF MANDATING EXTENDED TEACHER PREPARATION

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Sloan 205

One way to raise questions about the wisdom of a particular teacher education policy is to confront its rationale directly. In the case of extended teacher preparation, this approach entails challenging the two main arguments used to support the superiority of extended teacher preparation over the conventional four-year format. Thus, we can question the validity of two claims central to the case for extended teacher education: 1) that we lack sufficient time within the four-year program to adequately prepare a teacher and 2) that we ought to make the college of education a postbaccalaureate school analogous to other professional schools.

In another paper (Tom, 1986, pp. 3-13) I have made the case that the key to improving teacher preparation is not to lengthen the study of general education, subject matter, and/or professional education. On the contrary, I argued that the problem with general education course work is its quality and coherence, not its length. Moreover, additional subject matter study is not as important as reorganizing this study so its focus is more on core disciplinary ideas and inquiry processes. Similarly, the present size of the professional curriculum may well be sufficient for the pedagogical knowledge developed in recent years, providing redundant and unnecessary professional content is removed from the current professional curriculum. Thus a reasonable case can be made that the rethinking of general education, subject matter preparation, and professional content is a far more significant reform than is the expansion of any of these areas of study.

At the same time, the second major element of the rationale for extended teacher preparation is also questionable (Tom, 1986, pp. 13-18). There is no compelling reason to believe that housing professional teacher education in an autonomous postbaccalaureate professional school is a wise idea. Establishing an autonomous professional school of education is unlikely to increase the status of the occupation of teaching. Further, such a postbaccalaureate school of education would tend to separate the academic and professional aspects of teaching. Instead of disconnecting itself from undergraduate arts and sciences instruction, the faculty in a department or school of education ought to support the reform of the arts and sciences curriculum while concurrently seeking to regenerate the professional component of teacher preparation.

However, I do recognize that serious arguments have been, and continue to be, made in favor of extending teacher preparation beyond the traditional four-year structure (see, for example, Clark, 1984; Counts, 1935; Denemark & Nutter, 1984; Gideonse, 1984; Holmes, 1937; Smith, 1980; Woodring, 1957). The purpose of this paper is not to attempt to counter these ideas, many of which are rooted in the two arguments I have just summarized, namely, that the

undergraduate curriculum does not provide adequate time for teacher education and that the school of education ought to be an autonomous professional school. Let us for now put aside the debate over the soundness of the rationale for extending initial teacher preparation into the postbaccalaureate years.

What I want to highlight in this paper is several hidden costs entailed by mandating that all teachers be prepared through five or six years of teacher education, with the professional part of that preparation occurring at the graduate level.[1] I believe that there are at least four areas where mandating extended preparation may lead to hidden costs: 1) Encouraging a focus on procedural issues; 2) Narrowing the talent pool of prospective teachers; 3) Reducing the diversity of colleges/universities offering teacher education; and 4) Neglecting the financial implications of extended teacher preparation. While these topics are at times overlapping, I have separated them in order to facilitate discussion and analysis.

Encouraging a Focus on Procedural Issues

To focus the issue on the advisability of adopting extended teacher preparation—as most proponents of extended teacher preparation do--leads to a procedural rather than a substantive debate. That is, the issue becomes which of two structures—four-year or extended teacher preparation--is superior (Clark, 1984). Some people marshal arguments in favor of the way teacher preparation is currently conducted, while others argue for an alternative approach which involves a longer time period. One structure for preparing teachers gets compared to another.

Typically, during the comparison of contrasting structures the substantive reasons for making a structural change (or not doing so) are given little attention. Neither is much attention generally devoted to underlying assumptions. It is not unusual for the discussion quickly to move to implementation problems—another procedural concern (e.g., Kunkel & Dearmin, 1981, p. 21). Lost in all the discussion are the purposes and ends particular structures are to help realize (Zeichner, 1983). Issues of means tend to take precedence over more fundamental issues of ends.

The procedural emphasis occurs, I believe, because of the way the question is initially framed: a comparison of two teacher preparation structures. To avoid—or at least to mitigate--a procedural focus, the initial question needs to be directed to substantive concerns. Instead of asking whether extended preparation is better than four-year preparation, or vice versa, the initial question ought to be directed toward identifying and explaining just what is wrong with our current approach to teacher

education (e.g., Murray, 1982; Zeichner, 1985). Starting from this point should lead toward issues of substance and goals, and underlying assumptions, as does Clark (1984) in his analysis of the context of teacher education. Even though Clark ends up suggesting a set of structural reforms (professional teacher education at the graduate level, increased funding for professional education, etc.), he does make these recommendations only after a careful and detailed analysis of the factors which have impaired the development of the field of teacher education. Most advocates of extended teacher preparation are not nearly so oriented toward problem definition as is Clark.

A hidden cost of the movement toward extended teacher education, therefore, is the way the issue has been framed in procedural terms. Asking whether extended preparation is superior to four-year preparation encourages relatively superficial analysis of these contrasting structures. While such procedural discussion is far too common in teacher education, there is no justification for an issue as important as the ends and means of our programs to become mired in discussion which often omits or downplays fundamental substantive issues.

Narrowing the Talent Pool of Prospective Teachers

Proponents of extended teacher preparation believe that such an approach would eventually attract more talented people into the occupation of teaching. In general, graduate-level teacher preparation is assumed to give teaching more prestige and thus make teaching a more attractive occupation. Many proponents of extended programming also advocate higher salaries, though such salary increases are an issue independent of adopting extended teacher preparation.

One problem in assessing the impact of mandated extended teacher preparation on the talent pool is that societal forces--as opposed to economic and prestige incentives--have often played a major role in attracting talented people to a career in teaching. Shanker (cited in Fox, 1984), for example, argues that three major historical factors have drawn excellent people into classroom teaching: the Depression, draft deferments for teachers during the Viet Nam War, and limited employment opportunities for women. Two of these forces no longer apply, and women increasingly have opportunities in other fields, often at considerably higher salaries than teaching. Societal forces which have subsidized recruitment are not as potent as in the past.

Today, more than in the past, the financial cost of entering the teaching profession is likely to be carefully scrutinized by

prospective teachers. A number of policy makers and teacher educators (e.g., Cronin, 1983; Rule & Stanton, 1984; Schwanke, 1981) have questioned whether qualified applicants are going to be willing to invest five or six years in preparation for a relatively low paying occupation. Moreover, survey data from Ohio suggest that given a choice between four- and five-year preparation programs, about 90 per cent of preservice undergraduates and about 60 per cent of practicing teachers would opt for four-year as opposed to five-year programs, but about 90 percent of both preservice and in-service teachers said they would attend extended programs, if these programs were mandated and led to a Master's degree (Cyphert & Ryan, 1984). However, two five-year programs with significant histories--one ten years and the other twenty years--both experienced drops in enrollment when the five-year program replaced the four-year effort (Andrew, 1981; Dunbar, 1981). In summary, there is cause for concern that adopting an extended format might reduce--perhaps significantly--the enrollment in teacher education programs.

One group which seems particularly vulnerable if extended programming were to become universal is low income and minority students. Many teacher educators express concern that mandating extended programs might dramatically reduce access to the profession by such students (e.g., Cronin, 1983; Cyphert & Ryan, 1984; Gallegos, 1981), but data on this issue are limited. Andrew (1981) suggests that some students have been excluded from New Hampshire's five-year program "on the basis of economic status" (p. 43), but he is not clear on the magnitude of this problem. However, at a time when the school-aged population increasingly comes from minority groups, we ought not be implementing teacher education policies which threaten to reduce the teacher role models available to these minority students. I fear that the most talented among minority and low income prospective teachers will be the first to be driven away from the profession by the adoption of extended teacher preparation, since these talented students will have the easiest access to alternative occupations.

Another group which appears vulnerable to the institutionalization of extended teacher preparation is students from selective liberal arts colleges. At many of these schools, teacher education in a four-year format is already in a tenuous position (Travers, 1980), and the movement to extended teacher preparation would probably force many of these institutions to drop teacher preparation. Survey data suggest that only one-third of the private institutions in Ohio are sure that they would continue to offer teacher education should five-year teacher education be mandated in that state (Cyphert & Ryan, 1984).

Some do argue that students from liberal arts colleges can continue to prepare to become teachers by taking their general education course work and academic majors at liberal arts colleges, with the professional work to be completed at graduate-level professional schools of education (Clark, 1984; Gideonse, 1984). However, if prospective teachers from liberal arts institutions do not have the opportunity to participate in early field experiences--and there is no reason to assume liberal arts colleges would make such opportunities available--a major magnet for attracting individuals to teaching would be lost (Hawley, 1985, p. 7).

While extended teacher preparation may well decrease the talent pool, it is also possible that the personal commitment required by a longer preparation program will encourage a higher percentage of teachers-in-training to enter the job market than is the case for graduates of four-year programs. Such an outcome did occur when New Hampshire moved from a four-year to an extended program (Andrew, 1981, p. 42), but no data are available on the longevity of the teaching careers of students prepared in extended programs.

On balance, there is cause for concern that mandating extended teacher preparation—or employing it on a wide scale--will have detrimental effects on the quality of the talent pool entering teaching. In recent years there has been widespread concern about the quality of the teaching force, but the adoption of more severe "screens" to entry--for example, entry tests, internships, and, of course, extended teacher preparation--is unlikely to have much desirable impact on the talent pool entering teaching unless there is concurrent attention to the "magnets"--for example, training scholarships, pay differentials for teachers, career ladders--needed to draw and hold talented and energetic individuals to a teaching career (Sykes, 1983).

Reducing the Diversity of Colleges/Universities Offering Teacher Education

There is consensus among policy analysts that the widespread implementation of extended teacher preparation would reduce the diversity of institutions offering teacher preparation (e.g., Clark, 1984; Hawley, 1985). In particular, extended programming would tend to reduce the number of liberal arts colleges which would offer teacher preparation (Cyphert & Ryan, 1984; Hawley, 1985, pp. 7-8), a development which leads heads of teacher education programs in independent colleges to be far less enthusiastic about extended programs than their counterparts in state-supported institutions (Baker, 1984). While there are a few liberal arts colleges which have already converted to an extended program format (e.g., Austin College, Allegheny College), most liberal arts colleges would

probably phase out their teacher education programs under a mandate for extended teacher preparation.

Some argue that this development would be desirable, as liberal arts colleges could then concentrate on providing subject matter and general education preparation for prospective teachers, a role which these colleges may be able to fulfill better than large, public, research-oriented universities (Gideonse, 1984). Meanwhile these universities, along with some research-oriented private universities, could assume the responsibility for graduate-level professional preparation of teachers. Little might be lost by eliminating small programs in liberal arts colleges as such programs often represent a bland sameness rather than the diversity and richness often claimed for these efforts (Clark, 1984; Joyce & Clift, 1984).

At the same time, other policy analysts cite several reasons for maintaining teacher education in liberal arts institutions. Already discussed are the talented students in many of these institutions, students who are unlikely to defer their interest in teaching until postbaccalaureate professional education. Concern has also been expressed about the implications of high status private colleges and universities abandoning teacher education (Hawley, 1985, p. 8). Lastly, liberal arts colleges are often viewed as good environments for the conduct of professional education because their relatively small size facilitates the development of both an integrated professional curriculum and a personalized relationship among students and faculty and because these institutions emphasize the ethical basis of teaching (Rule & Stanton, 1984).

The pros and cons of the value of maintaining professional preparation within liberal arts institutions are hard to evaluate. There <u>is</u> a blandness and similarity among <u>all</u> teacher education programs, but accrediting agencies and state certification requirements are responsible for much of the standardization of programs across institutions (Conant, 1963; Joyce & Clift, 1984). How much would liberal arts colleges deviate from the deadening sameness of today's professional curriculum if certification and accreditation standards were less prescriptive? We do not know. Neither is it clear whether the talented prospective teachers in many selective liberal arts colleges overbalance the weaker prospective teachers from other non-selective liberal arts colleges. Nor can we easily judge the effect of high status liberal arts colleges abandoning teacher preparation. Thus I conclude that the hidden cost of liberal arts colleges abandoning teacher preparation is less easy to assess than is believed by either the proponents or opponents of this development.

Neglecting the Cost Implications of Adopting Extended Teacher Preparation

Nothing is more obvious than that extending the preparation period for teachers is an expensive proposition. Advocates and opponents alike grant this fact, and the concerns about cost have arisen whenever there has been major interest in extended programming (e.g., Andrew, 1981; Cogan, 1955; Miller, 1939; Soltis & Timpane, 1984; Winetrout, 1963). Yet the specific costs of extended preparation have rarely been analyzed with sufficient care.

These costs can be seen as occurring at three levels: the individual candidate, the institution, and the larger society. At all three levels, the costs are substantial, and the implications of these costs sizable.

For the individual, Hawley (1985) estimates the cost of added tuition at a public institution and foregone first-year earnings at almost $20,000 (considerably higher if the student attends a private institution). Unless there is a concurrent increase in scholarships and other entry-level subsidies, there likely will be an overall drop in the quality of the talent pool, perhaps a precipitous drop in the case of low income and minority students. Unfortunately, state legislatures are more inclined to establish "screens" to entering teaching than to create such "magnets" as scholarships and student loans; screens are much less expensive to implement than magnets (Sykes, 1983).

At the institutional level, the costs are extremely difficult to calculate because multiple factors interact. Is the education faculty currently underutilized or fully utilized? Will the extended program have an internship which requires careful supervision? Will the extended program abandon the predominant lecture format so common in four-year programs and move toward a labor-intensive clinically oriented program (e.g., Andrew, 1981)?

The societal cost is somewhat easier to assess. Certainly the taxpayer is going to have to assume some additional financial burden, unless we are prepared to let extended programming reduce the quality of the teaching force. Assuming that we merely want to maintain the quality of the current teacher candidate pool and assuming that we can do this by eliminating the added costs to the student of a fifth year, the taxpayer would have to provide a subsidy of almost four billion dollars to prepare 200,000 teachers per year (Hawley, 1985). The societal cost would be reduced somewhat should private colleges and universities continue to prepare a segment of the preservice teachers, but then these

institutions would bear the cost of subsidizing the added costs of a fifth year. After making other financial adjustments (e.g., higher first year salaries for teachers who start with a Master's degree, increased university services for the fifth year, etc.), Hawley estimates the total cost of implementing a fifth-year Master's program nationwide at almost six billion dollars. Even if Hawley's assumptions are challenged--and they can be--do we really think that American society is prepared to pay considerably more than now for preservice teacher education? Or perhaps more importantly, should we not consider alternative uses of these funds for such policy initiatives as higher teacher salaries or intensive in-service education?

Pluralism in Structures

In this paper, there is no ringing endorsement of four-year teacher preparation. In fact, I believe that there are a number of problems with present-day teacher education, problems which ought to be identified, delineated, and addressed. To do so, however, goes beyond the scope of this paper (see, for example, Zeichner, 1985).

Most of this paper involves a discussion of the extended program format and some comparison of this structure to the conventional four-year approach. This focus on structures, of course, is exactly what I have earlier characterized as inappropriate because such structural analysis tends to overemphasize procedural issues. However, I believe that there is little choice but to address the desirability of the extended program structure, since policy makers have made the choice between a four-year and an extended format a key issue in the reform agenda for teacher education. To fail to address the issue of extended teacher preparation is to fail to be seen as concerned about the improvement of teacher education.

While I believe that there are fundamental flaws in the rationale for extended preparation--flaws I reviewed at the beginning of this paper—I have focused on the hidden costs of mandating extended teacher preparation. To mandate extended preparation is to encourage a focus on procedural issues, to narrow the talent pool for teachers, to reduce the diversity of colleges/universities offering teacher education, and to neglect the financial implications of adopting extended preparation. While there is room for debate about the severity of these hidden costs, they do raise questions about the wisdom of implementing extended teacher preparation on a wide scale.

The proper policy to pursue is to work at improving the quality of teacher preparation, regardless of the length of the program.

Key questions concern the ends and purposes of teaching and teacher education--where we confront what Zeichner (1983) calls alternative paradigms--as well as issues concerning the coherence of general education and the extent to which subject matter preparation entails the fundamental study of a discipline. Some may find it congenial to pursue the reform of teacher education within an extended format; others may believe needed changes can be made within the traditional four-year structure. Both structures should be possible.

Notes

[1]While extended teacher preparation comes in many variations, there is a growing consensus that extended preparation ought to involve a four-year liberal arts education, with appropriate general education course work and subject matter specialization, followed by graduate-level study in professional education (e.g., Boyer, 1983; Clark, 1984; Gideonse, 1984).

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